

REMARKS

The present application now contains claims 1-22, of which claims 19-22 are added by this amendment to cover further aspects of the invention as described in the specification. An additional fee of \$60 is required and included herewith for claim examination since the previously paid filing fee was for five independent claims and eighteen total claims for the patent application mailed December 5, 2002, and now pending there are six independent claims and twenty-two total claims.

In the Office Action, the Examiner restricts the claims as follows:

Group I. Claims 1-4 and 14-16, drawn to an apparatus and method to check pressure in helicopter blades, classified in Class 200, Subclass 385.

Group II. Claims 5-13 and 17-18, drawn to an apparatus and method for filling helicopter blades, classified in Class 416, Subclass 61.

The above restriction is respectfully traversed for the reasons set forth below. However, as required under 37 CFR 1.143, to complete the response, Applicant provisionally elects Group II, identifies original Claims 5-13 and 17-18 as readable thereon, and identifies new claims 19-22 as readable thereon. Applicant also identifies Claims 15 and 16 (which the Office Action classifies in Group I) as classified in Group II, i.e., reading on the Group II invention. Claims 15 and 16 recite steps of filling the blade coordinated with the pressure checking.

The Examiner has considered the inventions to be distinct, each from the other, because the inventions of

Groups I and II are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable in a single combination or separately. The Examiner states that the "...invention I has separate utility such as checking the pressure of an already filled blade."

Applicant respectfully maintains that all of the claims of the present invention are directed to the same invention and should be examined together since the pressure checking and fluid filling are so closely related together as to justify an examination of all of the claims as a single invention. Figure 1 illustrates the checking and filling functions of the invention as being integrated into the same housing and interconnected by the same fluid line to the hollow helicopter blade and pressure sensor. The invention provides the checking system and the filling system that communicates with the hollow helicopter blade through a single connection to maintain pressure integrity during the checking and filling processes. Therefore, it is not reasonable to regard pressure checking and filling as independent and distinct inventions.

In fact, according to MPEP 803, "If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent and distinct inventions." Additionally, since the filling system also provides for a pressure checking function, a search of Class 200, Subclass 385 will be required. In light thereof, it is believed that an action on the merits of claims 1-22 in a single application is in order.

Additionally, as cited above Applicant submits that claims 15 and 16 were improperly classified under Group I, which is drawn to an apparatus and method to check pressure in helicopter blades. Claims 15 and 16 include the steps of filling the hollow helicopter blade, as well as checking the

pressure of the hollow helicopter blade, and should be reclassified under Group II, which is drawn to an apparatus and method for filling helicopter blades. Applicant requests that claims 15 and 16 be reclassified under Group II for the reasons stated above.

In view of the foregoing discussion, Applicant submits that the requirement for restriction is improper and should be withdrawn. However, Applicant has provisionally elected Group II original Claims 5-13 and 15-18 and new Claims 19-22, drawn to an apparatus and method for filling helicopter blades.

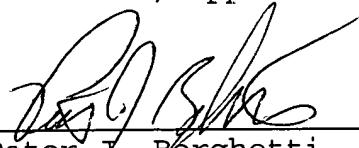
Enclosed is a check for \$60 (1 new independent claim in excess of three independent claims and 2 new total claims in excess of twenty total claims) for the examination of new dependent claims 20-22 and new independent claim 19. In the event any additional fees are deemed necessary please charge any underpayment of fees to or credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 03-2410, order 06079-104.

In accordance with Section 714.01 of the M.P.E.P., the following information is presented in the event that a call may be deemed desirable by the Examiner:

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Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: January 30, 2003

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